

Olympus High School



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May 20, 2011

Dear 2011-2012 Junior Honors Student,

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Olympus High School Honors English program.

Honors English students read literature which will teach them of important literary figures, eras, styles, themes, and perspectives. We select our reading carefully for high literary value; we also strive to select readings with inspiring social messages. Some of your reading through the year may be challenging and mature. We ask you to enter our program seeking a growing and learning experience, with an open mind, and with the trust that we want you to learn, to experience high-quality literature, and to gain the perspective necessary to write and read on a college level. While effective reading skills are important, reading at the college level requires more: you must feel prepared and willing to read challenging texts and to analyze writing in complex styles and on sophisticated subjects and themes. To allow us to begin this work immediately, please complete the following summer reading assignment before school resumes in August.

- **SUMMER READING** This summer, please read *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. We will use the novel to begin discussions and activities the first week of school. **Please bring your copy of the book to class for the first few weeks of the school year.** If you read the book very early in the summer, it may help to annotate it or to keep some simple notes about the characters and plot to use during this first study unit. We prefer you do not use outside materials (*Cliffs Notes*, *Spark Notes*, Internet summaries, etc.) as they tend to control and cripple individual thought and self-confidence. Please begin this assignment early and pace your reading and writing.

WHERE TO GET A BOOK: You may check out a copy of the novel from the circulation desk at our school library on Tuesday, May 31 or Wednesday, June 1. If you do NOT check out a copy on one of these two days, you must get a copy of the novel on your own. Books will NOT be available from the school at any other time, including during the summer.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READING: We highly recommend reading the non-fiction novel *Blood River: A Journey to Africa's Broken Heart* by Tim Butcher. This book has not yet been through the necessary process outlined by Granite School District to allow us to assign this book as required reading; therefore, you are NOT obligated to read it, nor will you have class work or exams directly related to this book. However, it will help you understand the historical and social context of *The Poisonwood Bible* and will make much of our work together on Kingsolver's novel easier and more meaningful to you. This book is widely available online, in public libraries, and in bookstores but is NOT at our school library.

- **ASSIGNMENT** Please follow the instructions on the back of this letter to complete the preparatory summer work.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE** As explained in the contract you filled out to register for this course, the summer reading will be a significant part of the first quarter grade. If you do not complete the work during the summer, your first quarter grade will reflect this. Moreover, if you fail to complete the assignment, your lack of effort will not be a reason for counselors or teachers to remove you from the honors class and place you in a different English class. Do your summer reading!

Congratulations, again, on your acceptance. We look forward to meeting each of you this fall and to working with you through the school year.

Sincerely,

Marci Bishop
Angela Van Berckelaer
Junior Honors English Teachers